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The Language of Faith

by CECIL DE BOER*

The heavens declare the glory of God l the firmament showeth his handi- rk. Day unto day uttereth speech, l night unto night showeth wisdom. ere is no speech nor language where ir voice is not heard. —PSALM 19

WHEN the Psalmist sang that e heavens declare the glory of God l the firmament showeth His handi- rk," he was using the language of th. He was not using the language an ancient philosopher who had made impersonal and more or less scien- c study of nature. This is to say t from the facts of nature alone we infer only that there is something t and mysterious within and beyond immediate environment which we never hope to control but which in t somehow controls us. The Greeks led it Fate, something to which even gods were subject.

Of course, whenever you and I as ristians view the marvels and mys- ies of nature, we naturally think of majesty and wisdom of God. But ng reminded of God is, after all, t the same thing as demonstrating s existence. It is a matter of history t the idea of a single, unitary God ver occurred to man. That idea was en by revelation to a single desert be from whom all civilized men re- ved it. The fact is that the belief in existence of *many finite* gods seems be more natural and congenial to n, since it makes for definite and ctable individuals. That is why polytheism flourishes in pagan religions. In the words of Warneck: "men will make anything into a God if so be they can get command of some other god of whom they are afraid."

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ACCORDINGLY, although we should always be ready, as the apostle says, to defend the faith, we should never forget that a poor argument for the faith will usually do more damage than a good argument against it. We should not try to do the impossible. If we do try, we may find ourselves in the embarrassing position of proving either nothing at all or altogether too much. It is futile, for example, to try to demonstrate either the existence or nonexistence of God from the facts and theories of the natural sciences. In testifying for the faith, therefore, it is better — and certainly safer — to confine one's claims to a few simple considerations. These could be such considerations, for example, as the fact that human knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is never final, that all the facts are never in, and that, therefore, all men necessarily live by some faith or other.

As scientists, modern men are still struggling to get a comprehensive view of that fragment of the universe which the sciences have discovered. And it is a recognized truism among philosophers that the facts disclosed by the sciences lend themselves to a variety of interpretations, all of them about equally unsatisfactory. That being the case, it seems evident that a logical inference from the facts of nature as we know them to the fact of God's existence or nonexistence is entirely out of the question. And the most that Christian thought can do, and the most that it should try to do, is to show that belief in the existence of a creative and governing intelligence is at least a reasonable belief. By "reasonable belief" I mean that the problems involved in the Christian belief — and there are plenty of them — are no more the result of unreason and blind acceptance than are

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the problems involved in other metaphysical beliefs. And by "metaphysical belief," in turn, I mean a belief by which a man actually lives. I do not mean this or that abstract theory.

* * *

ANOTHER simple consideration concerns the fact of mystery in the universe. Philosophers early discovered that the facts nearest at hand in our daily lives are frequently the most mysterious. But because these familiar facts are daily with us, they soon appear to us as ordinary, natural, and, therefore, reasonable. So it is that we easily deceive ourselves into believing that we thoroughly understand them. Take, for example, such ordinary things as light, time, change, space, knowledge (that is, the human act of knowing). The truth is that a completely explanatory account of these everyday things has yet to be given. And until it is given, these things continue to be mysteries. In other words, human experience is chiefly concerned with two kinds of mysteries, namely, those we have become accustomed to, and those we have not. Those we *have not* become accustomed to we recognize as being indeed mysteries, simply because we cannot reduce them to those we *have* become accustomed to. And the moral is this: since we are living in a universe of countless problems and mysteries to begin with, why quarrel with the Christian religion merely because it points to a few more? In fact, it may well be that these few more, if we really understood them, might be seen to contain the key to all the others.

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YET another simple consideration has to do with the fact that the universe in which we live has somehow given rise to the existence of supernatural entities, namely, human minds or souls — these being defined as moral, rational beings who know that they are moral and rational. That being the case, it seems reasonable to suppose that the universe around us must be at least as complex and mysterious as these supernatural beings to which it has somehow given rise. In other words, the universe of which we are a part seems to have more in common with ourselves than with such a thing as a blind, rambling electron. And, speaking of blindly moving electrons, it seems clear that in the case of organisms they run blindly in a certain way in order to secure future results. Evidently, there are any number of ways in which they might run blindly and *not* secure these results. It seems, therefore, that the laws of nature as they are known to the physical sciences do not yet completely account for what in fact does happen even in nature.

In short, an adequate account of man and the universe around him appears to require something much more complex than atoms and electrons. All of this, again, is just another way of saying that no scientist *as* a scientist can tell us much of anything about the existence or non-existence of a supreme governing intelligence. There may be such an intelligence ruling the world and there may not be: the scientist wouldn't know. He couldn't know — as a scientist. Moreover, a god who could be scientifically verified, in the best and most rigorous sense of scientific verification, would have to be a god who could be manipulated. And a god who could be manipulated would not be a god worth having. Such a god might suit the purposes of magic but he would be absolutely out of place in the realm of religion.

* * *

FINALLY, to us Christians God is much more than merely the "Architect of the Universe." Whenever we say that God is the Creator of the universe we imply a dependence of the world upon God — a dependence so absolute, so complete, so utter, as to be without analogy in our experience. In other words, we have no discursive knowledge of creation. In the fact of creation we face the problem of origins, a riddle no man can solve. We cannot understand it by analogy; we can only know it by being told of it.

And so, to the Christian, the universe is analogous to a great work of art — say, a great painting. A painting can, of course, be judged from the scientific, that is, from the strictly physical, point of view. Attention would then be restricted to such things as the chemical composition of the paints and oils, the geometrical properties of lines and masses, the particular length of the light waves reflected from the canvas, and so on. And such a scientific evaluation might indeed satisfy some few people who had made up their minds to confine their interests to what is scientifically verifiable.

But to most people it would not seem unreasonable to ask about the artist, about his personality, his interests and his purpose. This would not, of course, be strictly scientific, since, obviously, only the artist himself could give the required information. And to the question of why the artist had chosen to paint just this particular painting, the answer could only be that he had chosen to do this simply because he felt like doing it. And any feeling that results in a great painting is obviously its own justification. Analogously, the final answer to the riddle of the universe can be supplied only by God Himself. To the question why He chose to create just this particular universe, the answer can only be the one found in Scripture, namely, "of His own good pleasure" He created it.

* * *

Thus the philosophy of the reflective believer can begin and end with the humble but eminently reasonable assertion: "I *believe* in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Then, and not until then, can we confidently join with the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God."

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The South India Surrender

by GEORGE STOB

One of the most discouraging events in the history of the Christian Reformed Church was the sudden abandonment of the South India mission field by the Synod of 1954.

For several years the Church had given thought to taking over the field. There were strong warnings against our doing so without first taking due note of the difficulties involved. The Church heard those warnings, but chose to go ahead.

It was reckoned that India was a strategic area, that the need was very great, and that an unusual opportunity was offered to us which we should not dare refuse.

Presumably there was no escaping the call to India. The decision was made. The Church committed herself. She prayed for men, and God gave them. She prayed for open doors, and confessed that God gave them.

In 1953 our missionaries entered the field, and what was thought to be a vast new venture was undertaken. But within a few months the "vast new venture" was a shambles, and the missionaries we sent out after so many prayers, at such great expense, and yet withal with so much hope, were back home again. And in June 1954 our great mission to South India was ended when the Synod of 1954 decided to abandon the field.

It would be easiest now to rest with the accomplished fact, and to let the whole matter die peacefully in our consciences. But it is not profitable nor right to do so. A failure so prodigious after a commitment so positive, prayers so fervent, and hopes so large, calls for honest self-examination.

If we judge honestly, I believe it will appear that our abandonment of South India was not necessary, not advisable, and not in any sense justifiable. The abandonment was a surrender, a flight from solemn obligation. And this was occasioned by the Church's unwillingness to look into and assess the difficulties in South India and as well the measure in which she was responsible for them, and by the Church's lack of decision and courage to face up to the problems in the task she had assumed and to put her hand harder and more firmly to the plough.

The Ill-Considered Beginnings

Mr. Arthur V. Ramiah, from whom we took over the field in South India, has been held to be largely at fault for the ruin of our South India Mission. There is little doubt that his attitude and behavior have stood much at the center of the difficulties that arose in South India. But we should not be judging rightly if we did not recognize that we ourselves contributed much to Mr. Ramiah's failings. Nor would we be honest if we should refuse to acknowledge that we ourselves were greatly at fault for the troubles which plagued our first missionaries. This will appear from an inquiry into the manner in which we took over the South India mission.

For some fifteen years or more Mr. Ramiah had conducted a faith mission in India. Mr. Ramiah was known to our people through letters and articles written by him in *The Calvin Forum*, and appeared to be a very able man of clear Reformed convictions.

About the year 1947 Mr. Ramiah spent some time in this country, and became a member of the Burton Heights Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. He had already won many friends for his field in South India, and seemed anxious that it should become, as he thought right, a *church* mission. He indicated his interest in having his mission taken over officially by the Christian Reformed Church. This was urged by friends of Ramiah among our people in Grand Rapids, and brought to the attention of our Mission Board. The Mission Board in 1947 brought this to the attention of Synod for information only, observing that already more than half of the financial support of the Ramiah work came from the Christian Reformed Church.

The Mission Board was authorized by Synod to continue to investigate. The Board did so, and finally asked the Rev. John O. Schuring, then in Ceylon, to make a visit to India and give a first-hand report of conditions and possibilities on the field. Rev. Schuring made a two-week visit to India in 1950, and submitted a long report to the Mission Board. Persuaded by Rev. Schuring's report, by letters from Mr. and Mrs. Ramiah, and by urgings from the "Ramiah Club" in Grand Rapids, the Board recommended to the Synod of 1950 that our Church take over the Mysore and Bellary fields in India.

The Board proposed, however, that the field should be taken over only on certain conditions, two of which were the following (Cf. Acts 1950, pp. 167, 168): 1. That the *indigenous plan* should be followed. On this basis our Church was to assume responsibility for the salary and housing of our own missionaries and for the cost of a training school for native workers. But the native Church in South India was to support native pastors and pay for the erection of church buildings, and native Christians were to provide their own village schools. 2. That "before reaching finality on a field or fields in India, a small token force of two ordained men should be appointed to work on the field for a two or three year period; at the end of that period a well-documented report shall be sent to the Board and Synod for final action."

There were some strong voices raised at the Synod of 1950 against this proposal to take over the South India field. Among the objections to so doing were the following:

1. Rev. Schuring's report was said to be full of disturbing information, indicating that most of the native workers were of Baptist background and Baptist trained, that acceptance of the Reformed position seemed to be motivated in large part by respect for Mr. Ramiah, and that concern for financial support seemed to have been a large factor in the ready acceptance of the covenant teaching.

2. There was too much uncertainty about the field, and it was deemed unwise to take it over, without more careful inquiry, under pressure of the influence of a strong group of Ramiah supporters in Grand Rapids.

3. Information vital to Synod and the Church was being withheld (Rev. Schuring's report was not distributed, nor even read to Synod), and other information given was quite misleading (the 1950 Board report calls Mrs. Ramiah "a lady of Reformed family," whereas she was at the moment engaged by the Wealthy Street Baptist Church).

Notwithstanding these objections, the Synod of 1950 decided to take over the field on the basis of the conditions set

The South India Surrender — Continued

forth in the report of the Board of Missions (Acts 1950, p. 73).

* * * *

THESE conditions were not acceptable to Mr. Ramiah, however. Mr. Ramiah said that a much larger measure of financial help was needful for the work in view of the extreme poverty prevailing in India. Thereupon the Board proposed and the Advisory Committee at the Synod of 1951 recommended a "reasonable adjustment" to the indigenous policy adopted by the Board.

This "adjustment" made the following exceptions to the original conditions:

1. 100% of salary and housing for five native pastors.
2. 75% of the salary of all native teachers in 28 local congregations.
3. 75% of the expenses of school children on the field.
4. 50% of the cost of each new chapel erected on the field.

Rev. Harry R. Boer, then Professor-elect of Missions, was moved to register his misgivings to Synod by way of a letter dated June 23, 1951. He observed that the Board's proposal was "not an adjustment but a complete surrender of the principle on the basis of which the Board was instructed . . . . to conduct its negotiations. No less is it an unqualified reversal of the principle of indigenous mission policy held in such high esteem by both the Board and the Synod of 1950."

Rev. Boer urged a distribution of the Rev. Schuring's report so the Church might be aware of the problems involved. He concluded: "I do not wish to be construed as saying that we may not under any circumstances adopt the Bellary field. I do wish to say that in my opinion the information now available to you is insufficient to make a responsible decision on the part of Synod possible. I greatly fear unhappy repercussions when, subsequent to adoption of the field, facts about it became known which have thus far not been disclosed." Rev. Boer therefore urged that the decision of the Synod of 1950 be adhered to, namely, that one or two missionaries should go to India and report their findings before final action is taken.

His letter was read on the floor of Synod. In answer to it, it was said that to follow Rev. Boer's advice would be to crucify the poor people in India "on the cross of indigeny." The Synod of 1951 adopted the Board proposals, decided to take over the Bellary field on Mr. Ramiah's terms, and to call missionaries for the field. The Synod of 1951 did not even bother to keep Rev. Boer's letter for its files, but handed it back to him. It appeared that neither Board, nor Advisory Committees, nor Synod, were kindly disposed to warnings about the manner in which the Church was taking over the Ramiah field.

The quite inadequate concern on the part of Board and Synod for some adherence to the principle of indigeny, the uncritical acceptance, without interest in further investigation, of Mr. Ramiah's demands, and the sudden decision to throw out the tentative arrangement and to immediately take over the field on Mr. Ramiah's terms — these were major factors contributing to the difficulties that subsequently arose on the field.

One of the primary concerns of the indigenous policy is that native Christians should develop a sense of responsibility for their own ecclesiastical life and for continuing mission efforts. Any foreign paternalism which provides large funds not only tends to kill initiative and self-dependence, but breeds an unwholesome interest in easy money. An indulgent policy of financial aid corrupts. It might be in point for us to inquire how much our subsidy program in India, of which Mr. Ramiah was made sole executor, corrupted Mr. Ramiah and contributed to the situation that developed in India.

In any event, it is an unhappy circumstance that all the difficulties in South India centered about the question of money. One needs only to read the report of the three missionaries to the Synod of 1954 to note that the major complaint against Mr. Ramiah touched upon his attitude toward and management of money. Note that the crucial point at which the break occurred between Ramiah and the missionaries was the removal of Mr. Ramiah from the Treasurership of the South India Mission. The Ramiahs were said to have cared only for money, were charged with planning exorbitant expenditures, and of "playing favorites among the workers by giving favors and raising salaries on the basis of their personal dislikes."

If this be so, the Mission Board and the Church had better recognize that the roots of this situation lay in the Board's proposal and the Synod of 1951's decision to reverse the decision of the Synod of 1950, to surrender the conditions which that Synod had set up, and to virtually abandon the principle of indigeny for India. Mr. Ramiah was allowed to draw the whole blue-print for financial subsidy. And our Church, instead of carrying on the tentative program of sending our men to India and await their report before final action, suddenly decided to take over the field on Mr. Ramiah's terms, and made him the administrator of the field and of the large funds we poured into it. It is little wonder that Mr. Ramiah was shocked by and protested against his summary dismissal from the Treasurership over the large funds we had long before put into his hands.

Our South India venture now lies prostrate, broken over the rocks of ill-managed finances. Perhaps it ought to be confessed that the poor people in India were not "crucified on the cross of indigeny," but crucified in part by the *failure to responsibly exercise* the principle of indigeny. I say "in part," because something else contributed to the tragic surrender of our South India Mission, — and that was the refusal to face up to the problems we helped create and to hold to the solemn commitments we had made to God and to the people of South India.

The Hand to the Plough

THERE is no doubt about our having made a strong commitment to the work in India.

The Synods of 1950 and 1951 resolved that our Church, after several years of consideration, should take over the South India field as *her own.* In answer to objections that were voiced against so doing, it was urged that there was great need on this field and a great missionary opportunity which our Church might lose to some other group (Acts 1950, p. 74). And, as evidence that the Church's thinking matured for final decision, it was said that "the church at large has given consideration to this matter, and at least one Classis has expressed itself definitely in favor of taking over this field" (Acts 1951, p. 73).

In all that was subsequently said and done, it is evident that our commitment to the mission field in South India was deliberate, definite, and complete. The interests, concerns, and prayers of the

hole church were enlisted, and in a ry large way the whole Church did, deed, respond to the great call to issionary service in India.

When at first there were no men sponding to the calls to India, Dr. e Korne reminded our people and our inisters of the great emergency in dia, and solicited their concern. In *he Banner* of April 4, 1952, the Mis- on Board report spoke again of the gent need in South India, in view of hich Synod was being asked to send t as many missionaries as the Board ight think advisable. The report add- l: "The Board and our people have en praying for laborers for the harv- t . . . . and we are confident that the ord will soon give the men we need r the field in South India."

The Lord did. Candidate Benjamin pma and Dr. P. Y. De Jong offered go to India. There were at least two her prospects in Candidate Ralph aker and Rev. Leonard Sweetman, both whom were subsequently called and stalled as missionaries to India. A oard report in *The Banner* of July 18, 952 noted that our Church's intense terest in South India was reflected Synod's decision to send four more issionaries in addition to the Revs. pma and De Jong. There was great nviction that "the Lord is putting fore the little Christian Reformed urch a vast new mission venture," d it was believed that in view of the usual task we were assuming, the en whom we were sending out "can come great in the annuls of mission story."

When difficulties arose, the Church rayed to God and was grateful for swered prayers. When Revs. Ypma d De Jong were unable to obtain sas, our churches were urged to pray hat God may open the door to that reat land so urgently in need of the spel." They did, and by December 952 our first two missionaries were on e way. The Director of Missions ave expression to the Church's spirit commitment and trust when, in an- cipation of the arrival of our mission- ies in India, he wrote: "What a signifi- ant day that will be for our work India! When William Carey went India he said concerning the pros- ects there for missions: 'Ask great ings from God and expect great things om God.' May we, too, as a Church sk and expect great things from God s we go forward with our divinely given assignment there" (*The Banner*, Dec. 12, 1952).

New difficulties arose when Revs. Baker and Sweetman were at first unable to obtain their visas. In this new crisis the Director of Missions wrote in *The Banner* of May 29, 1953: "Two matters stand out clearly. We should be much in prayer that the Lord, who is sovereign over all, may keep open the door to further missionary service in India . . . . The second matter which ought not to be lost sight of is that God in His mysterious ways often converts troubles into blessings."

We did lose sight of these things later. But it appears that all along we were wholly committed to India, under conviction that this was an historic opportunity for our Church, and we were professing that we could ask and expect great things of the God who would convert our troubles into blessings.

Turning Away from the Plough

TROUBLES did arise. They were not occasioned by a hostile attitude of the Indian government, nor was there a nationalist uprising against our missionaries. Troubles arose because of exceedingly strained relations between Mr. Ramiah and our missionaries.

It is important to bear in mind that Mr. Ramiah had been working the South India mission for nearly twenty years. And when our Church took over the field in 1951, our Board and Synod made Mr. Ramiah the sole administrator and supervisor of the whole South India mission. What is more, Mr. Ramiah was made Treasurer, administrator and distributor of the large subsidies that the Synod of 1951 had voted upon — 100% of salary and housing for five native pastors, 75% of the salary of all native teachers in local congregations, 75% of the expense of the school children on the field, and 50% of the cost of new chapels erected on the field.

It is not wholly surprising that tensions should have arisen when the new missionaries sought a new division of work on the field shortly after their arrival, transferred the Treasurership from Mr. Ramiah to Miss Bosch, and pressed for an accounting of the finances administered by Mr. Ramiah up to that time. Mr. Ramiah saw himself greatly reduced in position, prestige, and power. This was no doubt a hard blow. The missionaries report that as a result Mr. Ramiah became vindictive, exercised a bitter hatred and wicked treachery towards the missionaries, spread false and slanderous reports concerning them, poisoned workers and natives against them, and threatened to force their expulsion from India.

A special Committee from the Board made an urgent plane flight to India in September 1953, with the intention of inquiring into the situation and endeavoring to resolve the crisis. Their efforts failed. The Committee had proposed that a transition arrangement be effected whereby the Ramiahs would continue in charge of the work for a year while the new missionaries were engaged in language study. But the new missionaries refused to agree to any arrangement except one that would involve the immediate dismissal of the Ramiahs, and put them in charge with the help of a few native pastors and other nationals. The Committee feared this drastic action would jeopardize the whole mission, which they felt could and should be saved. Thereupon the missionaries left India.

When this matter came before the Synod of 1954, the Board recommended that we retain the field on the following grounds: (1) We have accepted responsibility for the field. (2) The need on the field is as great as ever. (3) We have already spent large sums of money on this field.

The Board proposed that new men should be sent to the field, and that one year from the time of their arrival the Ramiahs should be retired and should withdraw from the field, — an arrangement which the Board had all confidence Ramiah would accept.

Synod decided, however, to abandon the field. It did so because it believed that the presence of Mr. Ramiah would make impossible harmonious and effective labors on the field. Synod considered that Mr. Ramiah stood in the way of our continuing with the field, and by that judgment clearly laid on Mr. Ramiah the whole blame for our surrender of the field.

This is unworthy. In one great swoop it makes of Mr. Ramiah the scape-goat who must bear the guilt for our having fled South India. We cannot honestly find such easy justification for our quitting the responsibility we once assumed. The fact is that after putting our hand to the plough we turned away from it, and without warrant.

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THE judgment that Mr. Ramiah stands between us and the discharge of our calling in South India is untrue.

The South India Surrender — Continued

It is belied by statements of the missionaries, who felt we could and should carry on in India by dismissing Ramiah. They felt that our missionaries could get other bondsmen from among "several influential friends among the business men in Adoni and government officials," they had assurances of the support in this of Mennonite and Reformed missionaries, were confident that they "would have the cooperation of most of the workers," and "believed the others would have been won over within a period of some months" (p. 27). On the floor of Synod Miss Bosch flatly stated that the notion that we were dependent on the services of Ramiah was a fiction.

In any event, the Church should have been willing to try to find some way of preserving the field and securing it for the future. What right had we to conclude that a few months' trial by our first missionaries gave conclusive proof that India was a hopeless field and that the failure of these first missionaries gave warrant for abandoning the field? We should certainly have made at least one more attempt by sending out new men, as the Board proposed, instead of summarily dropping the whole thing because of a few difficulties.

Synod's action was neither decisive nor courageous. It was the counsel of a Church that stood weak and helpless before a problem situation, and without the courage to make such judgments and take such action as might meet the situation and enable us to fulfill our calling. The Church looked at the situation that challenged her character and her faith, and simply decided to meet the situation by getting rid of it.

This does not bear much resemblance to the great spirit of the Christian missionary tradition. It is in the character of the Christian missionary commitment to expect to meet large obstacles and to move against them in faith. Those who in the spirit of William Cary ask and expect great things from God do not run away from difficulties. Other mission fields have been secured after many years of hard effort and often at the cost of life as well as property. Our own easy abandonment of South India on the altogether flimsy pretext that it did not give "reasonable promise of consecrated and harmonious labors" (which seems to mean only that the blind and aging Mr. Ramiah was still living in India) is a betrayal of the long history of missionary heroism and sacrifice.

I mean to express no judgment against our missionaries. No doubt their position in India was in many ways an immensely difficult one. The failure of our Board and Synod to make adequate investigation and to hold more firmly to sound and tested missionary policy greatly complicated the task of our missionaries to India. It is true that they did not within the few months they were there establish our mission in India. Why should we have expected them to? Is their failure to do so after one brief effort reason for us to throw up the whole mission and to count their sacrifices and the sacrifices and prayers of our people a vain thing? If in the very first effort to secure a mission field we fail and suffer casualties, that is no cause for surrender. It is a call rather to send other workers to carry on and take advantage of whatever may have been gained or learned from the first endeavor.

There were other workers ready to go. Rev. Leonard Sweetman, who had long been a student of the culture of Southeastern Asia, had already been installed as a missionary to South India, had received his visa for entrance, and was ready to sail in July, 1954. The Rev. John O. Schuring, who made the first real contacts with South India, was already enroute to Ceylon, and held a 3-months permit to visit India, with excellent possibilities of obtaining a regular visa for work in India. It is unbelievable that in view of the fact that we had two able men ready to go, their way made easier by the sacrifices of our first missionaries, we should have made no attempts whatsoever to hold and serve the field, but simply and precipitately decided to abandon it.

It is unfortunate, indeed, that the question should even have come up for consideration. Strictly, we had no right to ask *whether* we should retain South India or not. We were called to consider *how* we should meet the difficulties that had arisen on our South India field. The Board would have given better and wiser leadership if it had taken it as beyond question that we are responsible for the field, and on that assumption proposed to Synod what measures should be taken to meet the crisis in India.

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We abandoned South India quite without warrant. The so-called "grounds" for the action are no grounds — they are mere rationalizations, and were adopted *after* the decision to abandon South India had been taken. The considerations that moved Synod were those that came out in the discussion which led to Synod's decision to reject the Board's proposal that we retain the field.

The big consideration, of course, was that Ramiah was reckoned the big obstacle to any hopes of a successful mission program in South India. That was obviously not a good reason. But there was an attempt to make it cogent by a peculiarly pietistic and subjectivistic appeal to Providence, and by a quite shocking bit of reasoning about missionary responsibility.

The pietistic appeal to Providence was the moving suggestion made by several delegates that "maybe" the troubles that arose in South India were God's way of telling us that we should work in Korea, Japan, or among the Tivs in Africa. This, of course, introduces into our thinking and behavior a pretty riotous notion of divine calling. Such easy interpretations of Providence can be used to serve almost any purpose. How convenient it would be to be able to say that what is really a flight from duty is rather the Lord's call to go to some other indefinite place! But how unworthy of a Church, and how ruinous to her spirit of commitment!

The wholly shocking interpretation of missionary responsibility, which greatly influenced Synod's decision, was the judgment that it is more important that we preach the gospel than that we preach it in a certain place. Therefore it was said, it would not be so terrible to abandon South India as long as we preach the gospel. Never did the Church strain so hard at a thing so much a gnat. And she swallowed it. But this one gnat is one of those little bugs full of the power to cripple and kill.

When a bright young man changes from the pre-Seminary course to a business administration course, how shall the Church answer him if he says: "I can be a Christian witness in business as well as in the ministry, can't I?" When a minister serves a Church — and we have been taught that a call is precisely to a specific congregation — he will have no trouble escaping if difficulties arise and another comfortable church is available. The minister now

is the license of Synodical example to ave the Church he serves and to say: t is not so terrible to leave, as long I preach the gospel." Or, if a mis- onary tires of a hard post in a foreign nd, why should he now hesitate to ave and take a nice church at home - "It is not so terrible, as long as he reaches the gospel." This rationaliza- on of our flight from India gives us ense to abandon any field if mere ractical considerations are advanced. ndeed, this explains our abandonment India. We were governed by prac- al, utilitarian, prudential considera- ons.

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PART of the tragedy of this whole affair is that it will unsettle the missionary interest and the missionary giving of many of our people. We have asked our people time and again to pray fervently for our mission to India, and we have assured them that God did most certainly answer our prayers. But now, after a trial of only a few months, we have abandoned the field. What did our prayers mean? Did God answer them? Or was it an ironic bit of circumstance that gave us an open door through which we could run out more quickly than we walked in?

Our people have given generously for the mission to South India. They had been doing it for years. Our money investment in South India was huge. Altogether it must have totalled more than 100 thousand dollars. To what end if when we meet a bit of difficulty we drop the whole thing? Is this responsible missionary administration? Can the Christian Reformed Church be trusted with the gifts of her people?

Or shall we hope that all is not lost, and that the prayers and the gifts and the hearts that have been given to South India will still make it a focus of missionary interest? And shall we hope that we will awaken again to a recognition that we still have a call to India from which we cannot quite so easily be discharged? Shall we hope for a return to South India, if God does not count us wholly unworthy?

Neither Theology nor Education

by HENRY SCHULTZE*

IT is a commonplace to assert at leaders in the field of education ave for some time been experiencing growing dissatisfaction with the hievements in the area of their chosen ofession. Many of them, committed the pragmatic test of determining the lue of education, have been disap- inted with the product of their inter- ts and activity. If the proof of the dding is the taste of it, then the dding is bad, very bad, for its taste nothing short of nauseating. The roducts of our educational efforts are ot at all reassuring along moral and ntellectual lines. It is not merely the isappointing fruits that cause educa- rs to wonder about education, but lso the almost total disagreement as to ne How, What, and Why of teaching.

There seems to be no particular ranch of education that has escaped his blight. Secular education has by s constant effort to change its philos- phy, its subject matter, and its meth- d, confessed that it has by no means rrived. And it is a good thing confess one's sins. Christian edu- ation is still struggling in its at- mpt to construct an adequate articu- ated philosophy. It has in the main een aping secular education and has allen heir to most of its weaknesses. t has not gone much beyond the modifi- ation method. And its modification consists mostly of the addition of a few Bible courses and perhaps of creating a bit of superficial religious atmosphere. But the real antithesis, about which so much is written today, has not in any fundamental way effected a distinct education.

Turning now to theological education, we may hope for a distinctive one from which, if not all, the faults have been eradicated. Yet it too has suffered from the general malady afflicting education in other areas. Professor Hartshorne, in a lecture delivered at Yale last April 22, made a confession long overdue in the American theological world. Said he, "From long experience and many studies I have come to the conclusion that theological education is neither theological nor education." That observation, I think, is very near the truth, and applies with an uncomfortable accuracy even to the conservative institutions.

Not Theology

THEOLOGY in education is usually conceived to be a subject or a group of more or less closely related subjects alongside of many others to which it does not bear an observable relationship and over which it has little or no control. It represents a far cry from the conviction that theology is the "Queen of the Sciences." She has lost her regal position by following after other gods. She has joined the crowds that assumed that science has discovered the best possible educational policy. She has not realized that science itself is at best thoroughly dissatisfied with its own efforts and is constantly shifting to new and different positions that vainly offer new hope.

Theology was once regarded as a deductive science. It assumed the infallibility of the Word. It proceeded from that one sure foundation to develop the contents of its teachings. But it yielded to the allurements of the inductive approach so characteristic of science. It lifted its anchor from the rock and it began to revel in the study of religious experience, and it is now floundering in a mire of substance alien to its own genius. It is no longer justified in assuming the adjective "theological."

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THE objection may be raised that this applies only to the seminaries that may be called liberal. But the fact remains that so-called "conservative" seminaries have not escaped the general debility to which all education seems addicted. They want to be modern in method and conservative in thought. And so they feel that their only salvation rests in remaining conservative. There is some hope in the fact that practically all such seminaries are somewhat aware of their deficiencies and are constantly working on new methods and a new curriculum. But their very character as *conservative* schools may

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Neither Theology nor Education — Continued

stand in their way of improvement. They want to remain precisely where and what they are. All change is regarded as dangerous, as leaving the landmarks. Consequently many such institutions are negative in their approach. They are satisfied in "holding their own" and spend their energies in defence. They are almost exclusively apologetic. They are strong in being "against." They are negative. Their positive and constructive fruits are meagre.

I know of evangelical seminaries that have men of unusual brilliance and acumen, who are masters in "showing up" the opposition. Such institutions are usually church-supported and church-controlled, and they are expected to reflect the exact position of the denominational group they represent. Any deviation from the path indicated by some of the interpretations found within the group brings down the ire of the duly constituted authorities. The assumption is that the denomination has arrived. Practically there is little that can be done but to defend the faith "once delivered to the saints." The faith to be defended is, however, an interpreted faith. And no seminary or church can expect to develop by merely being "against." It is from their positive teaching that their strength will spring.

There is, of course, a very valuable place in an evangelical seminary for the apologetic element. But it should not be forgotten that a positive development of fundamental tenets may be the very best defense. To show the error in the position of the opponent does not always demonstrate the truth in one's own position. Theological education in an orthodox seminary should place a far greater emphasis in its teaching program upon what it stands for and relatively less on what it does *not* stand for. Theology is not essentially negative. It is predominantly a positive presentation of what God has done, is doing, and will do. In so far as a seminary fails to do justice to this positive element, it carries the adjective "theological" only under sufferance.

THERE is another characteristic found in most conservative seminaries, in many ways closely associated with this negative, apologetic approach, and that is their confessional emphasis. After the period of the Reformation there was a period called Confessionalism. The Reformation had released the practice of interpretation from the Catholic devotion to tradition. The supremacy of tradition meant that all interpretations must be such as to serve the ecclesiastical tradition. It meant stagnation in theology. At the present time most of the conservatives are devoted to a creed, and the study of theology must serve that creed. It is not at all surprising that a group of evangelical, and even of non-evangelical, schools have rebelled and raised the cry, "No Creed, but Christ." It makes little difference what the particular confession of a denominational group may be: each expects its seminary to promote the particular creed to which it stands committed. There can be little theological advancement in such a program. Though it is never intended, such seminaries are in the service of a confession. Even the Bible itself is harnessed for such a purpose. Certain passages are stressed to the exclusion of others. Scriptures are sometimes interpreted to bolster certain creeds. The Bible becomes confirmatory rather than informatory. Thus it is not permitted to be a real revelation.

There are, of course, certain advantages in such an approach. It gives the student a controlling theology. It gives system, even though the system is sometimes erroneous to the student's thinking. It enables him to stand firm over against every wind of doctrine that blows. But it muzzles the Scripture, which is to be regarded as the only rule of faith and life. This delivers the lethal blow against all theological development. It means that each definite group "has arrived" in its creedal statements. This is true of all the groups committed to a creed or confession. They argue in circles, not intentionally, but *de facto*. The Bible must interpret the creed, and the creed in turn must interpret Scriptures. This is a situation common to all confessional churches and their seminaries.

It may be argued that this is certainly a fault of the Calvinistic churches with their strong emphasis on Confessional Standards. And it is true that they share this characteristic with most other evangelical churches. However, the Calvinistic churches have developed a very strong conviction that their position reflects the Scriptures in the most complete and perfect form, and consequently they are not too much disturbed about the possible abuse of Scriptures. Still, theoretically the Calvinist is not committed to the position of creedal supremacy. The Calvinists have even made a provision in their creedal documents for the possibility of error and have indicated the way of correction. But in practice the churches will not tolerate deviation from the creedal position. This is exceedingly restrictive to theological development, especially in seminaries controlled and financed by the church. Such a church is positive in its conviction that any deviation from the standards can only be deliberate heresy. It is very conscientious about this. A deviator, be his deviation ever so slight, can look for a decision that will relieve him of his position in the seminary, especially if he be an influential member of the faculty. In fact, controversy among the brethren is frowned upon because it is usually so unbrotherly and so disturbing to the peace of the church. Yet that peace, be it ever so desirable, is often bought at too high a price. Controversy has always been a fruitful source of theological development. In fact, every great forward movement in the history of the church was initiated by the throwing off of the tyranny of creeds. Theology will grow in an atmosphere or environment congenial to its growth. But it must not be told "So far and no further." That is to kill it, and dead theology is no theology at all.

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THERE is one more item, in this connection, to which I should like to call attention, an item that tends to detheologize theology. I refer to the encroachment of non-theological disciplines upon the seminary curriculum. Such encroachments usually mean the ultimate replacement of theology with some branch of study more or less, and frequently much less, closely related to theology. In many seminary curricula a course in sociology is required. That is not theology, though it can be of much use in the training for the ministry. It should never be allowed to replace a distinctively theological branch of study. Courses are sometimes offered in education, in religious training, in dramatics, in philosophy and in many other subjects. As these subjects increase, there is an increasing impoverishment of the theological disciplines. And so one could go on illus-

ating the indictment of Dr. Hartshorn at theological education is not theological.

Not Education

TURNING now to the second part of ie indictment, namely, that it is not ducation either, we find the situation n a bad way. This indictment is not ne that can be directed only toward ie seminaries. It characterizes most ducation. But it is of particular moent to seminary teachers who regard eir specific task as being of such r-reaching importance that it does not xclude the eternal weal or woe of all sponsible beings who will ultimately e affected by the work of the seminary assroom.

In achieving educational proficiency ere is required a knowledge of the udent's mental equipment. The prossor should know and reckon with hat the student has learned and what is intellectual abilities are. He must ow what the student's motivations e. This will of course vary considably with each individual. Such abilies can usually be ascertained by an bservant teacher after a few days of assroom association. This is readily termined in the outstanding student, respective of whether he be outstandg for being below or above the averge. But in respect to the average stuent, and most students are average, it kes considerable time to achieve the nd of knowledge that can be of real lp to the professor in assisting his udent.

There are, of course, certain assumpons on the basis of which the profesr must operate. A seminary student mes to his institution with an A.B. egree. But the A.B. degree may be a ry poor indication of what the stuent has learned. The requirements for n A.B. degree may and do vary widely their emphasis and in the grade of ork required. The grades in the varis credits received may be far from idicating the actual competence of the udent concerned. This situation conitutes a real difficulty for the profesr who is conscientious about really ducating his student. The Roman atholic schools have overcome this difculty to a large extent by receiving udents in the grades and following em through to their graduation from ie seminary. This system is all the ore effective because the educational rogram is under strict ecclesiastical ntrol. This control is amazingly uniorm in its basic educational philosophy. Some Lutheran churches have a comparable educational system. After a fashion it may be found in the Christian Reformed Church also.

In the Christian Reformed Church there is no ecclesiastical control, but there is a general commitment to certain basic concepts on the part of those who have assumed the responsibility of promoting Christian education. But certain deficiencies manifest themselves under such more or less individual advocacy. The high schools find that the students who have come to them from the grades are far from perfect in their equipment for high school work. And the colleges often stand amazed at the lacunae and weaknesses in the equipment with which the high school student enters college. The seminary, in turn, feels precisely the same way about the college graduate who begins his theological education. One cannot expect the students to be identical in their equipment, ability, and motivation. Perhaps it is as well so. Variations among students and prospective ministers can be a wholesome thing. But in so far as a professor attempts to teach an unknown quality, he is seriously handicapped. He can go through the motions of an instructor, but real teaching under such conditions is limited. After all, a seminary professor is not teaching a course in systematics or hermeneutics, but he is teaching a student, a prospective minister. A much closer relationship between the college and seminary teacher may obviate much of this lack of familiarity with the student. The purpose of such a relationship need not and should not be primarily to dictate the contents of the college or the pre-seminary courses, nor to indicate the methods that should obtain. Rather the purpose should be to obtain some knowledge of the contents of a given course and of the way it is being taught. After all the seminary should begin where the college leaves off. The seminary must therefore know where the student left off. In brief, competence in theological teaching calls for some familiarity with the student's pre-seminary equipment.

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ANOTHER weakness in the educational aspect of seminary training is the fact that seminary professors are not always, if ever, very clear on what the seminary student is supposed to learn. This may in part be due to the professor's ignorance of his student, but it is more likely due to the lack of clarity about what theological training really is and what its objectives are. The men on one and the same teaching staff may be pulling in opposite directions. Some feel that seminary course should develop good theologians. Others place all the emphasis on developing sympathetic and effective pastors or counsellors, popular pulpiteers, or inspiring teachers. True, we would like proficiency in all these areas where the student is weak, or develop to greater excellence where he is strong. The policy advocated by many an educational system, and popular today, is that of strengthening the student's strong points. The present day craze for experts in particular areas has promoted this approach, as has the so-called elective system. The latter has been somewhat discredited by the student's selecting courses and professors that make his studies pleasanter. But life is not like that. When it comes to real life, the student must be prepared for a ministry that involves difficult routes and offers no detours.

It has long been held that education calls for definite objectives. There must be pre-established goals which the entire staff must strive to achieve. In order to realize a common objective, frequent conferences should be held so that all can work toward a single great objective, and each can make his individual emphasis serve the whole. This would help to remove the confusions and disturbances that characterize the minds of too many entering the ministry. These have not been educated. They have merely been exposed to various fields of interest.

Hence, too, many theological professors have little conception of how their courses dove-tail with others offered in the same institution. And what is still more lamentable is that they seem to be unconcerned about it. They sometimes proclaim, a bit too loudly, that they know nothing about a particular problem that is distinctly theological, and that a student brings up in class. They say, "It is out of my field." Thus contrary winds may blow over the classrooms. The teachers may be aware of it and may choose, in the interest of seminary tranquillity to ignore it. Obviously, commitment to a common theological philosophy would render confusion less likely. I am not pleading for a full and perfect accord in the contents of the various courses, nor in the methods of teaching. Vari-

ations may bring about some cross-breeding that can initiate some valuable student reflection and discussion. But good educational efforts in a seminary call for some knowledge of a colleague's approach, position, and methods. A professor should be deliberately supplementary, not identical and certainly not oppositional.

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THERE is in theological training, as in all other forms of education, a widely different conception of the direct method of preparing the student for the ministry. We are living in an age when the How, rather than the What and the Why, is stressed. If we were developing robots, this would not matter, but certainly we can have no robots in the ministry. And yet that is precisely the tendency, slipping in almost imperceptibly. The church often complains that a seminary graduate does not know how to conduct a consistory meeting, how to conduct himself in a sick room, at a funeral, and so on. The criticism is that he does not know *how*. It is said that he cannot meet the practical situations that arise in a congregation. So the cry is for more practical courses in the seminary even though it may be at the cost of the more fundamental courses which enrich the student as to the *what* and *why*.

An elder whose consistory was experiencing some difficulty in securing the services of a minister approached me with the question as to whom they should call. A professor will usually evade a direct answer to such an enquiry. But I suggested that there was a goodly number of candidates whom the Synod had examined carefully and had considered competent for ministerial service. He responded that they were not interested in a candidate because the consistory was tired of training young ministers. This was, of course, a reflection upon the practical training the candidates received in the seminary. In my opinion the consistory should be proud to make what contribution it can to the training of a young minister. And the consistory is in a position to make this contribution, for it is not limited by classroom restrictions. And it is a form of training that does not end as long as the minister remains in active service. But it is just this clamor from the churches that has moved seminaries to shift their emphasis to the "know-how" courses. Practical courses, such as those in education, are beginning to receive undue emphasis in modern theological schools. There are courses in sickroom conduct, in techniques for consistory meetings, in marriage problems, in counselling, and in other practical aspects of the minister's work. Many seminaries simulate the actual conditions in the classroom or adopt a form of internship in a local church. All this is done supposedly under the direct supervision of the professor concerned, and in more or less full cooperation of the ecclesiastical authorities whose congregations are directly concerned. But the actual situation can never be reproduced by such direct mechanical control. Even the courses in practice preaching are greatly handicapped by the fact that actual preaching is somewhat mechanically controlled. The student can not be fired by the consciousness that he is bringing the Word to a hungry people. He knows that he is on trial. He is practicing, and what is worse, he is too conscious of it.

I presume that there will always be room for a judicious use of courses in the practice of the ministry. But a student who has been taught the "know-how" at the expense of the "know-what" and the "know-why" is being poorly trained. The practical work in the ministry has important personal aspects. Each minister is different and each case which calls for his service differs widely from others because of the personal element. Each local situation presents new problems. Even the time element brings about variations. A minister cannot in a robot fashion reproduce what has been done in his seminary. Nevertheless the craze for practical courses has already taken over many a seminary. It is not education. Nor is it theology. It is a by-product of a machine age. It encroaches upon the fundamentals and threatens to replace them.

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THERE still remains to say a word about classroom methods. These vary in the seminary classrooms as the ability, industry, and motives of the professor vary, and as the classes he confronts differ. The most popular method is that of lecturing. Due to the large numbers now crowding the seminary classrooms, the lecture method is becoming increasingly popular. It has the advantage of being the easiest and the least time-consuming. But there are comparatively few students that can be induced to *learn* by listening and taking notes. Most of the material so secured will soon be forgotten, if indeed ever understood. If the motive is merely to garner materials, it can be done in a far more effective and permanent way by the purchase of a good text or encyclopedia. There are some professors who can deliver stimulating and inspirational lectures which may move the student to further reflection and further independent study. But few professors are so gifted.

It is generally acknowledged that the acquisition of facts is indispensable for constructive thinking, but most students are averse to the acquisition of facts and prefer to meet with their classmates or to set aside a class session for discussion. Teachers may yield to this student pressure and cooperate in what may be a futile experience. The acquisition of facts is rarely regarded as a sort of end in itself, but rather as a means of securing a credit or passing an ecclesiastical examination. Professors sometimes feed that conception by giving the student special instruction for the preparation for a given examination, even suggesting the precise questions that are likely to be asked. Something has gone wrong when the following happens, as it happened to me. A student approached me about his work in a course. He was not doing good work. He disliked the course, and perhaps disliked the professor too. He said that when he passed the course, he would be through with it. And he added significantly that "when I am through with it, I am THROUGH with it."

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IF a seminary professor is to succeed in *education* the most important contribution that he can make is to develop the skills in thinking about the subject matter under consideration, and to instill within his student the motivation to continue to learn and to think about it after leaving the seminary.

Thus this article is but a plea to think and rethink theological education and to promote its development to a greater fidelity to theology and to education. Both of these factors are suffering deplorably in modern theological schools.

EVANSTON—1954

by JAMES DAANE

DELEGATES from more than 160 denominations, representing 170,000,000 people, came to Evanston from the ends of the world for the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches to see what could be done to end disunities that riddle the Church of Christ.

They came from 48 nations: from Czechoslovakia and Burma, from Athanamthitta and New York. The babel of strange tongues, the variety of colorful outlandish ecclesiastical garments, bewigged bishops and bearded churchmen with jet-black robes but a trifle darker than themselves, all combined to express dramatically the World Council's cosmopolitan character and to lend substance to its favorite song: In Christ there is no East or West.

Evanston was a wholesome religious shock treatment to any who think the body of Christ is of preferred nationality or blood.

As Big as the World

MANY things can and will be debated about this second ecumenical (world-wide) gathering. But one thing is not debatable. It was big.

There were 600 delegates with power to vote, selected and sent by the member churches. Most churches seemed to have sent the flower of their leadership. But to doubly insure that the Council would be big with talent, there were also 300 consultants with advisory powers, selected and invited by the Council itself. Among this 300, bishops and seminary professors — especially professors of Systematic Theology — were common and plentiful. Add 600 accredited visitors and 25 official observers,[1] and the Evanston Assembly appears as not only diversified but as big both in numbers and talent.

Other indications of Evanston's size was the press coverage which was the second largest ever, and the 125,000 that overflowed Chicago's great Soldier Field for a Sunday evening public worship pageant which drew a larger crowd at Soldier Field than any since the Dempsey-Tunney fight and created the worst traffic jam Chicago has seen in many years.

A World Council of the Christian Church should be big, and Evanston 1954 was big.

Ecumenical Crossroads

EVANSTON was a critical meeting of the World Council of Churches. Would the churches find themselves in a closer unity? Or would the age-old divisions of Christendom only be deepened by the impact of coming together? Would the delegates return home more than ever resolved to foster denominational distinctiveness? This was a real possibility, for an intensification of denominational loyalties has been one of the unintended by-products of the ecumenical movement. Or would the members of the Council return home with an over-riding conviction of that oneness of the churches in Jesus Christ, of that indestructible unity in Christ which under-rides all intra-Christian doctrinal, liturgical, and governmental differences?

The greatest question was the American fear that the selected theme of the World Council for the Evanston meeting would spell disaster. Christ the Hope of the World, was not the theme of American choice. Prosperous and comfortable American Christendom was little interested in a theme which pointed to a Second Coming of Christ that would end what most American Christians regard as a not altogether unpleasant present. *The Christian Century* had widely voiced the American apprehension that the Evanston theme might easily undo all that had been achieved at Amsterdam in 1948 and even make the Evanston meeting the last.

This fear prompted Bishop Bromley Oxnam to make the keynote of his coast to coast televised Sunday morning sermon that opened the World Council gathering, "We intend to stay together." Over and over he repeated the words of Amsterdam: "God has brought us together — we intend to stay together."

If stifling, humid heat or recurrent but never refreshing rains — the humidity was higher than the heat, making it sometimes difficult to tell whether it was raining or not — could have melted the churches into permanent unity, Evanston's August weather could have done it.

In spite of the weather or because of it (who shall say?) the World Council of Churches stuck together. They met to meet again, most likely in Japan or Greece, about 1960.

World Council Not a Super-Church

BESIDE staying together—which was an accomplishment of a sort — what did the World Council accomplish at Evanston? As early as this, no single mind can wrap itself around and adequately appraise so massive and many sided an event as Evanston. Only the years will be able to measure its significance and gauge its relative strength and weakness.

But it is already evident that merely staying together is not enough. The satisfaction of coming together at Amsterdam and Evanston will soon spill over unless the churches can find ways to a deeper and more permanent form of being and acting together. Already there were expressions of pained regret that the members of the World Council could not partake of Holy Communion at a single table.

If the World Council undergoes a development toward deeper unity, will it become a Super-Church? To answer this question one would need the mantle of a prophet. Although the World Council has often been accused of being a Super-Church, the facts at present do not warrant such an indictment. By its constitution the World Council does not have power to force its majority views on dissenting churches. Moreover, the leadership of the World Council is sufficiently realistic to recognize that any attempt of the World Council to compel acceptance of its views would blow the World Council higher than a kite. It must be remembered that the World Council is comprised of denominations (and exclusively of denominations) and that all of them have denominational traditions and loyalties

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[1] Through the kindness of Dr. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council, I received an invitation to be a member of the Second Assembly as an Official Observor. Such status granted membership and attendance rights at Sectional and Group meetings — otherwise closed to all except delegates and consultants — where the Assembly discusses the reports of its Commissions on Faith and Order, Evangelism, etc. At these meetings, closed to the public, the press, and to Accredited visitors — the spiritual pulse of the World Council is best felt. The Observor may see all and hear all, but say nothing, which being interpreted means that at times he "suffers in silence."

which it would be consummate folly to ignore.

To be sure the World Council is interested in Church Union. But the Council itself does not try to *effectuate* unions of its member denominations. It recognizes that steps toward mergers of its various members can only be taken by the member-denominations themselves. The Council regards itself as merely an instrument for bringing the churches together so that the churches may on the one hand rediscover their essential oneness in Christ, and on the other discuss the differences that keep them apart. The establishment of such theological conversation could indeed be of great profit to all the churches. Moreover, the Council is quite right in urging that some of the divisions in the churches are rooted in non-theological differences. Factors of race, economics, sociology, and of nationality have played a role in dividing the Church of the Christ, in whom there is no East or West, male or female, Jew or Gentile.

That the World Council might ultimately produce a dictatorial Super-Church is surely a real danger. But this danger stems not from the nature of the World Council as such, but from the undeniable fact that the danger of hierarchy is found in any church organization. Every church is infected with the disease of hierarchy. Even the smallest churches have a steady and ample supply of papal aspirants, would-be protestant popes whose insistent voices demand that the words of their mouth be accepted as the authoritative standard of faith and practice. And this danger is nowhere more subtle and insidious than in those very churches which decry papalistic authority. What the World Council may become in the future, no man knows. As of now, it is not a Super-Church. If at this time it would begin to function as a Super-Church, it would quickly dig its own grave.

Conservatism vs Liberalism

SHOULD conservative churches belong to the World Council? This is a difficult question to answer, but in any event the following considerations must be taken into account when an answer is given. I mention these considerations because all too often an easy yes or no answer is given which quite ignores them.

1. Conservatives, especially conservative Americans, must recognize that although the American National Council of Christian Churches is a sub-division of the World Council, it is not the World Council. The American NCC is far more liberalistic than the World Council. It will not do to think of the World Council as simply an enlargement of the NCC. My impression, gained through attendance at the Evanston meeting and through a two week attendance at the World Council Institute at Celinqe, Switzerland, is that the World Council is more theologically solid and conservative than is the NCC.

2. The World Council is not dominated by the American NCC. There is little doubt I think that "Christ the Hope of the World" would not have been selected as a theme had the Americans had their way.

3. The World Council is not as liberal as some conservatives outside the World Council seem to think. If anyone attended Evanston expecting to hear the deity of Christ or the historicity of his Cross or Resurrection or Second Coming denied, he was either surprised or disappointed. In my hearing none of these things were either denied or debated.

4. The World Council is still in a *formative* stage. Evanston was only its second meeting. It is this fact that moves some of the conservative leadership of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Holland to feel that that Church should be in the World Council. Affiliation would allow such a conservative church to help form the World Council along conservative lines. In the event the World Council takes on an uncongenial form, the way of withdrawal is always open, and such a withdrawal would constitute a far more effective witness for conservative Christianity than does a mere ignoring of the World Council.

5. There surely are Liberals within the World Council. Yet Liberalism as such was not very obvious at Evanston. I suspect that the weight of conservatism at the Council kept the liberals from being as vocal as they might have been. But this in itself is a good sign. Moreover, it ought not to be overlooked that the purpose of the World Council is to get *all* churches together to discuss what they hold and what they do not hold in common. The World Council cannot, without becoming a Super-Church, deal with the Liberals found in its various member churches. As Visser 't Hooft once told me, they can be dealt with only by the churches in which they are members. The World Council itself cannot step into a particular denomination and excommunicate individual churchmen.

6. It is an oversimplification to think that the World Council can be evaluated simply by reference to the terms "conservative" and "liberal." Much depends on the definition given these terms. Professor Edmund Schlink was recently classified in *the Banner* as a conservative. This is true, if by "conservative" we mean someone who stands within the Christian tradition. But if a conservative is to be judged by the Canons of Dordt, then Prof. Schlink is not a conservative. By this standard of judgment there were few if any conservatives at Evanston.

On the other hand there were many at Evanston who were not Liberals, i.e., outside the Christian tradition, but who were liberal*istic*, i.e., individuals and churches which in lesser or greater degree have been modified by the Liberal tradition. The liberalistic churchman or church, in distinction from pure Liberalism, must be regarded as part of the Church of Christ.

Consequently, it is inadequate to define the World Council in terms of "conservatives" and "liberals," unless we allow the term "conservative" to include any and all Christians and Christian Churches, i.e., as including those who are far less conservative than ourselves *and* those who are liberal*istic* rather than Liberal.

The Church in our time is a sad picture. But the Church of Christ of which we all are members, and which should have the concern and prayers of our hearts, is what it is. We may — and should! — regret that the Church of Christ in our time is what it is. Most of the Church is quite different from the Christian Reformed Churches, but it is also true that most of the Church of Christ is outside our denominational walls. We may be sorely tempted to dump all the liberal*istic* churches and churchmen into the hopper of Liberalism and write them all off as outside the Church of Christ, but such succumbing to temptation will be neither an act of truth nor service. The Liberalistic church and churchman, in distinction from the wholly Liberal church and churchman, are a part of the Body of Christ and may not be conveniently ignored by any members of that Body.

If by "conservative" we include any ıat are within the Christian Church ıd tradition, then "liberal" must in-ude only those outside the Christian hurch and tradition. This leaves us ith the liberalistic church and church-ıan, a large sector in our time, which ın not be conveniently dismissed from onsideration as is done when the Vorld Council is defined simply in rms of Conservatives and Liberals!

7. It is naive to think that nothing eeps the World Council from being a ıccess except Liberalism. The World ouncil is belabored by almost every ifference that has emerged since the ırly history of the Christian Church. lany of the divisions of Christendom re age-old differences that pre-date ıe rise of theological Liberalism by ıany centuries. Liberalism has, to be ıre, complicated the problems, but if ıe World Council is to heal the breach etween Reformed and Lutherans, or etween Calvinists and Methodists, more ıan Liberalism will plague the effort.

There is also a tendency to confuse ıatters by making every divergence om what is regarded as conservatism ı expression of theological Liberalism r Modernism. The claim — to men-on but one — that the Eastern Ortho-ox century-old view of tradition and ıe Bible is an expression of liberal odernism is a confusing over-simplifi-ıtion of the difficulties that belabor ıe World Council. Such appraisals re-eal neither theological understanding or historical sense.

The differences that burden the World ouncil cannot be indicated by saying ıat Conservatives and Liberals who ave nothing in common are trying to o the impossible thing of doing and ıying something together. The dif-erences that burden the World Council re for the greater part the century-old ifferences that created many divisions ı the Church of Christ long before iberalism reared its head. And I think safe to predict that if the World ouncil breaks up, the break up will ome in the area of these age-old dif-erences.

Liberalism is by no means the whole ifficulty. This will be seen at once if e imagine a gathering of all evan-elical conservatives met for the pur-ose of defining the Christian Hope nd the Second Coming of our Lord. Vhat difficulties would have arisen if ur evangelical friends in the National ssociation of Evangelicals would have ecided during the years of our affilia-tion with it to state for the world the Christian Hope of the Second Coming of Christ!

Most of the difficulties that belabor the World Council of Churches would belabor any ecumenical movement which sought to bring all churches together to speak a common statement of the Christian Hope to the world, no matter how conservative such an ecumenical movement might be!

8. I strongly suspect that many European and Asiatic churchmen do not know the full measure of American Liberalism. None with whom I spoke were aware of Bishop Oxnam's statement that the Jehovah of the old Testament was a "bloody bully." While many people felt that there were profound theological differences between Prof. Schlink's address on the Evanston theme and Prof. Calhoun's address on the same subject on the same afternoon, Prof. Schlink assured me that Calhoun was in full agreement with him. Although both were on the same Commission and signed the same report, it seems, at least to me, quite impossible that both are in actual theological agreement.

The impression was inescapable that the American Liberals at Evanston had placed "a watch upon their lips" to avoid an open clash with the more conservative forces. If they did not, Liberalism in America is more dead than some of us had thought.

9. This is not meant to imply that no strange theological sounds were heard at Evanston. I heard many remarks which I should have liked to explore, — for example, that unbelief must not be taken too seriously since Christ had in fact died for and saved the world, or that the return of Christ means the "end of the age" but not the "end of time," — but the hand of silence was heavy upon me. Karl Barth was not at Evanston, but the echoes of his theology could be heard.

10. Visser 't Hooft was quite right when he urged that the World Council does not possess the authority to inject itself into its member churches to deal with Liberals, yet most of the comfort that can be squeezed from that fact runs through the fingers with the consideration that the World Council had made an outstanding Liberal one of its presidents. As long as Liberals of Oxnam's theological stripe are raised to the top levels of office and responsibility in the World Council, Conservatives will find this an ominous wind, chilling their enthusiasm for the World Council. Such actions do much to estrange the substantial number of Conservatives outside the World Council.

Evanston and Communism

THE charges of Carl McIntyre and others that by permitting Joseph Hromadka from Prague and other churchmen from behind the iron curtain to come to Evanston, the World Council was making itself the unwitting tool of Communism, proved to be wild and wide of the mark.

Hromadka had been my professor for three years at Princeton and the charges made in the years since he returned to Prague that he was a communist were always difficult to believe. I had been advised by friends not to write him since it would likely create difficulties for him. It was therefore a pleasure to meet and speak to him again. He assured me that I need have no fears about corresponding with him.

Hromadka is not a card-carrying member of the Communist party. He was a member of a group that helped to replace the former Czech government with the present one. He also believes in a classless society. Like many a non-Communist he believes that Marxistic analysis of capitalistic societies has effectively revealed some of the basic weaknesses of such societies and that, in actual fact, Marxism, in spite of its profound religious errors, has more loudly decried these weaknesses than did the Christian Church. Hromadka has little sympathy with the tendency of many American Christians (strangely enough usually found in greater number in the conservative than in the liberal wing) to simply and uncritically identify capitalism and democracy with Christianity. He believes that Christianity is critical of any social, political, or economic order because any and all of them are corrupted by Original Sin.

Hromadka is willing to accept communism in the political and economic orders of life. But he rejects communism as a substitute for Christianity. Christ and not Marx is the Lord of history; Christ and not Marx has the answers to the ultimate questions about God, man, sin, and salvation. Hromadka is a communist then in the same sense and limited area as American Christians are Liberal Democrats in political and economic beliefs.

But what and if communism in

Czechoslovakia intrudes into his religious and ecclesiastical faith and practice? Then says Hromadka, as he had many times said years ago at Princeton, it is time to go to jail or die.

One may doubt the wisdom and prudence of Hromadka's position. One may doubt whether it is possible in the long run to be a Christian and a communist in the limited sense defined above. But if his experience shows that these two views cannot co-exist within one man's soul and life, those who know Hromadka feel there is little doubt as to which he will surrender. For he is a Christian first, and then a communist.

* * * *

At a press conference at which the secular press tried hard to obtain sensational news, Hromadka was asked by a secular pressman whether he did not feel bound by his loyalty to Christ to seek the conversion of the communists. Hromadka rose to answer that he surely believed that the communists needed to be converted to the gospel, but he added that Liberal Democrats, in fact all sinners, needed it no less.

Another question from the secular press asked whether it was not true that dialectical materialism was taught in the schools of Czechoslovakia. He answered that it was, but added that in many democratic countries the vague humanistic idealism taught in the schools was also not Christian. He said that the result was that in such countries many people cannot tell a Christian from a non-Christian, whereas in his country the difference was obvious and in the open, and the shape of the enemy was clear.

These remarks about secular education were particularly interesting in view of the fact that Charles Taft (brother of the late Bob Taft) who was chairman of the press conference, had that same morning done his best (and it was good enough) to have a statement removed from the Council's report on Evangelism which urged that religious education in the schools wa an aid to Christian evangelism. An the same chairman had successfull fought for the removal from the Coun cil's report on the Christian Hope of statement that urged that the Churc should be concerned about bringing th gospel to the Jews. Taft wanted thi removed because, said he, it will offen my Jewish friends!

* * * *

Evanston 1954 is over. Bu the name of the Chicago suburb wil be spoken many times in the years t come.

And the smile evoked by the Con tinental European who slept all nigh in a smoke-filled room because he coul not figure out the gadget that control American windows, and the smile evok ed by an American bishop's groan tha the user of an electric shaver shoul be lodged in a girl's dormitory, wil linger on.

In spite of everything, the Worl Council of Churches did manage "t stay together."

The French Worker-Priests

by HARRY R. BOER

After the death of Cardinal Suhard the worker-priest movement fell on hard times. In October, 1953, conversations between French cardinals and the Vatican resulted in the promulgation of a series of papally decreed strictures intended to limit severely the activity of the worker-priests. The most incisive of these concerned the limitation of daily labor. The priests were allowed to spend only a "limited time" daily in their chosen vocation. What was a "limited time"? After a period of intense discussion between the cardinals and the priests it was officially declared in February, 1954, that by a limited time the Pope had meant three hours a day. Those who were not able to adjust their working schedule to this decision were required to give up their work by March 1.

End of a Vision

The end of the movement as it had been envisioned and organized was now in sight. A few months after the promulgation of the October, 1953, restrictions the Jesuits withdrew the ten priests they had given to the effort. In February, 1954, seven Dominicans were removed from the work. Soon some seventy were left to carry on the conflict with the hierarchy. Whatever adjustments may be made in the future, there can be little doubt that a great and promising effort to reach the unchurched with the message of the gospel, as the Roman Catholic Church understands that message, is nearing its end.

What were the reasons for the opposition to it in the Vatican? The reasons that are given do not sound convincing. One of the cardinals declared, "The Holy Father has taken this decision on dogmatic grounds. Being priest and being a priest-worker are two different modes of life. It is not possible to unite them in one person without changing the conception of the priesthood. . . . Moreover, (the priest) risks involvement on the secular level. The priest, however, must remain outside this area while of course not wholly separating himself from the world." The plausible explanation of the cardina does not make clear why the dogmatic ally based limitations decreed by th Pope were made after more than te years of worker-priest activity. Sti less does it make plain why the move ment had been launched with every ec clesiastical blessing. The great stumblin block of full-time daily labor had bee the cornerstone of the movement fro the beginning. And what about the tw priests who are members of the Frenc parliament? And what about other functioning in teaching positions i schools and universities which do no seem to be directly related to the "tru work" of the priesthood?

The restrictions placed on the worker priest effort therefore invite the though that the social implications of it alarme the conservative hierarchy. That th worker-priests would so wholeheartedl associate themselves with the masses that they would, in particular cases, tak positions and engage in activities tha were not compatible with prevailin ecclesiastical views — these develop ments had not been foreseen. But

these developments, there is reason believe, that were determinative in haping the ultimate attitude of the ope to the worker-priests.

It is not necessary, however, to probe ne papal mind on this score. To do so s not the interest of this writing. Rather, the interest is to give some indication of a missionary movement in rance which, however one may view , was born of a deep concern to reach ne masses with the message of the hurch, and to contrast it with the vangelistic situation in the United tates. Before doing so let us speak concluding word about:

Europe and the Gospel

THE effort of the French worker riests should speak to us because the roblem it so dramatically sets forth is ot simply a French Roman Catholic roblem. It is a problem that confronts ne churches everywhere in the Western orld, Protestant as well as Roman atholic. Particularly is the problem of ne unchurched acute in Europe. Poor urope. Its plight is so tragic. It is haplessly caught between the two olossi in the east and across the Atntic. It has been the victim of two ars in one generation, its countries ave been crossed and recrossed by ontending armies, and while it is reovering from the physical and moral evastation of the last war it is busily reparing for the third catastrophe. Yet ne religious apathy remains.

> The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot either see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders and their sorceries or their immorality or their thefts. — Rev. 9:20-21.

How shall the Church in such a situaon speak the healing word? How peak to those who will not hear? Shall he Church wash her hands of them nd minister only to those who seek er ministry? Has the time come to ay, He that is filthy let him be made lthy still, and he that is righteous, let im do righteousness still? Surely such n attitude forgets that the Church is ot without responsibility for the feelng many entertain with respect to her. Her sins are many. Not only has she ften left the true doctrine and given stones for bread, but often when she taught the true doctrine she did so in a spirit of unconcern for the ills that everywhere encompassed her sheep. Too often the Church has been the quiet defender of a *status quo* that favored the few and burdened the many. The lie of Marxism that religion is the opiate of the people is made three-fold more diabolic by virtue of the element of truth that it contains. But even if the Church were as free from sin as her Lord is she would still have to follow his example by calling a hopeless humanity to the hope that her message proclaims. The time for the ultimate categorization of the filthy and the righteous never comes while the Church has a task on earth.

A section of the priesthood in France was moved by the plight of the unwilling, and the effort to which their concern moved them has ended in frustration. Were ecclesiastical power interests placed above the welfare of the souls of men? We cannot say with certainty, but known factors make one fear it. The Lord will judge His people.

The American Situation

IN America we find a somewhat different religious picture than in Europe. There is not in our country that avowed hostility to the Church and to the gospel that is met in broad sections throughout Europe. We have not had in the United States the fearful religious wars and ecclesiastical conflicts that have so indelibly stamped European life. Our country is founded on a religious live-and-let-live. This attitude of religious neutralism undoubtedly roots in a large measure in religious indifference as well as in the fact of our multi-colored religious situation. But the benefits which this historical attitude has conferred should not be overlooked. It cannot be said that the American masses are "through with the Church." Many may be indifferent to the Church, they may not be interested in her message, but they have not, in the European sense of the word, rather consciously settled their account with the Church by a deliberate historically conditioned rejection. This view would seem to be warranted by the fact that between the years 1850 and 1954 American Church membership has climbed from 16% of the population to nearly 60%. During the past fifteen years alone there has been a growth of approximately 12% of the population affiliating with the Church.

It is therefore questionable whether the American religious situation requires so radical a step as the French priests undertook. One is inclined, rather, to say the opposite. It would seem to be reasonable to continue at the present time to pursue *normal* evangelistic methods rather than resort to methods of an emergency nature. But what do we mean by *normal* evangelistic methods? By this we mean the method clearly taught us in the N. T. *This method envisions the growth of the Church in terms of increasing the membership of existing congregations or by founding new congregations.* This principle is of particular importance for the evangelistic activity of the Christian Reformed Church.

The Christian Reformed Problem in Evangelism

EVANGELISM in the Christian Reformed Church is not exactly in a flourishing condition. There is in the first place the factor of Dutch immigration to Canada which has necessarily asked much of the Church in terms of ministerial strength. Energy that might have gone into evangelism has been funneled off to Canada. We have done this gladly, but the fact cannot be gainsaid that gain here has probably meant loss on the evangelistic front. This is a passing situation, however. The Canadian churches will soon be providing their own young men for the ministry.

What is much more alarming is that the Back to God Radio Hour has not resulted in larger follow-up work than has in fact taken place in non-Dutch American areas. Efforts undertaken in this direction seem to have lacked broad Church support. While we may be grateful for all that has been accomplished through the ministry of the Back to God Hour it may never be forgotten that *the work of effective evangelism is done first and foremost by personal confrontation, by the living voice of Christ's witness speaking in flesh and blood presence.* While I fully allow that the Back to God Hour is and should be a ministry to America as a whole, I see no reason at all why in many particular areas the contacts that were established between the unchurched and the Christian Reformed Church by the radio hour have not been used to bring congregations of believers

into being. The task of evangelism can only be *aided* by radio ministries. It can never be *accomplished* by them. The radio hour can never be more than a long distance assault on the strongholds of unbelief. It can prepare the way for, but can never take the place of, Christ's spiritual infantrymen who must in every case actually *plant the banner of the Cross* in the areas occupied by the powers of unbelief. The question is, why have we done so little infantrywork in exploiting the possibilities opened by the radio ministry? The answer to this question may be found, I suspect, in a larger measure than we like to contemplate, in the causes leading to the Neighborhood Evangelism program which is so characteristic of our mission effort in America.

A number of our churches engage in a missionary program generally called Neighborhood Evangelism. The characteristic feature of this work is that a lay evangelist appointed by the local congregation meets with those who respond to his work in a building or chapel. That is to say, the unchurched are *not* brought directly into the Church. Generally the converts form a separate group. In isolated instances the group may become a congregation, but the usual development of things is that the group never gets anywhere ecclesiastically and simply meets for edification. The appearance of ecclesiastical existence is sometimes given a group by constituting it as a "branch church" with two elders from the sponsoring church in attendance each Sunday. But this does not make it a church and the whole structure is everything but Reformed.

It is interesting to observe how much this effort corresponds to the method employed by the worker-priests. They, too, met separately with their people and even consciously avoided involving the local church in the work. It will also have been observed that the latter effort enjoys my sympathy and even admiration, while the method employed in Neighborhood Evangelism does not. Why is this?

The answer to that question is simple. The French priests had no other alternative. The people whom they wanted to reach would not enter a church. Therefore they turned *as a last resort* to the action they launched. In America this necessity does not obtain. Americans are still willing to be identified with the Church. The great growth in Church membership the past fifteen years demonstrates this. The Southern Baptists are building churches at the rate of five a week. Billy Graham integrates his massive evangelism with the churches. But we — we set up neighborhood chapels, sometimes two blocks away from the sponsoring church. We follow an abnormal course in evangelism while thousands in America are being won for the Church normal, that is, New Testament, evangelistic patterns. Why do we do this?

The Christian Reformed Church and the American World

THE reason that leaders of the Neighborhood Evangelism movement have given for the erection of separate chapels is that Americans of non-Dutch descent just do not feel at home in Christian Reformed Churches. If the nonchurched are to be reached they will have to be reached in some other context than the existing congregational fellowships. I fear that there is an alarmingly large element of truth in this analysis of the cause of the reluctance of the unchurched to associate themselves with Christian Reformed congregations. We speak of "our Church," "our school," "our ministers," "our people" (especially "our people") "our creed," "our tradition," "our background," "our Dutch heritage." With a few generally recognized exceptions, who is not Christian Reformed is an "outsider." What some openly say about the undesirability of Negroes becoming members of Christian Reformed Churches is broadly held in our churches in a quiet, unspoken manner, and in varying degrees of consciousness, with respect to the "American world." People of "non-Christian Reformed background" and of "American extraction" are welcomed in "our circles," but then they must show that they are well on the way to fitting into the Christian Reformed pattern. The delicate socially sensitive antennae of the average human being soon sense this religious and social exclusiveness. And so they stay away or after a short period of association do not reappear.

The converse side of this situation is that we do not make strenuous efforts to gain the unchurched for the Church. We believe in missions, yes, but missions at a distance. We speak to the whole of America through the Back to God Hour, and we speak to the own neighborhood by way of the neighborhood chapel. The fatal evidence of the inadequacy of this kind of missionary concern lies in this simple undeniable fact: existing congregations do not noticeably grow as a result of evangelism, and new churches in which the converts of evangelism should be formed into manifestations of the Body of Christ do not come into being.

Are not then the leaders of the Neighborhood Evangelism program right in saying that we must work outside the existing churches? May the exclusiveness of Christian Reformed Churches keep us from witnessing in the normal way? We face a most unhappy dilemna here in which the horn of abnormal evangelistic witness is only slightly less sharp than the horn of no witness at all. A mission effort that is based implicitly or explicitly on a religious and social dualism is not and cannot be healthy and its fruits cannot be enduring. There is only one place in which the fruit of mission work is secure. That is the instituted Church of Christ where the word and the sacraments are administered in the fellowship of God's people under the government of the authority initiated by Christ. But we do not seek to gather converts into existing churches nor do we seek to establish new ones. Missions does not mean simply "witnessing." Missions means witnessing with a view to gathering converts into the *visible, instituted, empirically existing Body of Christ.* Where that is done mission fruits are abiding. Where it is not done they become attenuated, scatter, disappear.

The French worker-priests tried to meet a problem arising in the first place from a mentality in the people they tried to reach. Their solution had, in view of the problem, a great deal to say for it. We are dealing with a problem in evangelism that arises in the first place from *our own* mentality. We here face the problem, the important problem, of our Americanization. This is a legitimate problem. It is a natural problem. It is only unfortunate that it is being solved so slowly. For it can admit of no doubt that our fruitful missionary witness in the land where we have found a name and a place depends on the seriousness with which we seek to resolve it.